



# Assessment Notes...

From the Standards and Assessment Division

December 6, 2002

## California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE)

### Testing of Tenth Graders Only in the Spring Administration Cycle (March or May)

It appears that some schools have tested tenth graders in the July, September, and November test administrations. The California Department of Education (CDE) has announced to all districts/schools that students in grade 10 only are to be tested in the spring of their tenth grade year. It is very important that the entire class of 2005 be tested this spring. **Please be sure that all of your current tenth graders for the class of 2005 are signed up for the spring administration of the CAHSEE, whether or not they have previously taken the test.** An annual census administration is critical for each class and for accurate score reporting. If a school has administered the CAHSEE to a tenth grader, the district should invalidate that score and inform the student that he or she should not have been tested. This student would need to retake the test with other tenth graders in the spring.

There has been some discussion about how to handle tenth graders who are repeating a grade or who are considered credit deficient. Consider what class the student is scheduled to graduate and complete the header or pre-identification information accordingly. For example, students who are scheduled to graduate with the class of 2004, whether credit deficient or not, should be identified as being part of that grade. Since each situation can be different, the CDE has determined that the rule is only to test tenth graders in the spring administration, whether or not they have tested before.

The CDE also found that about half of the students tested in July 2002 were marked as tenth graders. As of July 1, students in grade 10 progressing to grade 11 should be marked as eleventh graders. Districts will have a chance to make any necessary grade corrections prior to August 2003 when the testing contractor prepares the annual results file for posting on the Internet.

Education Code section 60851(b) states: "...Each pupil shall take the high school exit examination in grade 10 beginning in the 2001-02 school year and may take the examination during each subsequent administration, until each section of the examination has been passed." The California Code of Regulations, Subchapter 6, Article 2, Section 1204 states: "Each school district must first offer the exam (CAHSEE) to each pupil in grade 10 only at the spring administration."

### Testing Students More Than Once in a Test Administration Cycle

In recent correspondence with CDE, numerous school districts indicated that they had selected November 2002 and January and March 2003 as the three testing opportunities for students. **School districts that are scheduling a January test date following a November test date must cancel this testing.**

These three testing dates are not valid test opportunities for students, for students testing on this schedule will not have received their test scores from the previous administration prior to the next testing date. Since the law specifies that no student shall retake any portion of the exam that he/she already has passed, students may only be scheduled for retesting if they have not passed one or both sections of the CAHSEE previously. Section 60851 (d) of the Education Code says: "A pupil shall take again only those parts of the examination he or she has not

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**Standards and Assessment Division  
California Department of Education  
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previously passed and may not retake any portion of the exam that he or she has previously passed.” The only way to ensure compliance with the law is to schedule students to retake the test after their scores have been received.

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction has established CAHSEE testing dates for every other month through September 2004. The testing dates are arranged in cycles to accommodate schools that have students on multiple tracks throughout the year. Districts may select one of the dates from the March/May cycle, one from the July/September cycle, and one from the November/January cycle (e.g., March, July, and November). Changing the testing cycle for different cohorts of students (e.g., Class of 2004 or Class of 2005) may result in having students in different grades on different schedules. In this case, testing every other month would be necessary to provide different cohorts three opportunities per year.

## Scoring, Reporting, and Testing

Education Code 60851 (d) specifically states: “The results of the exit examination shall be provided to each pupil taking the examination within eight weeks of the examination administration and in time for the pupil to take any section of the examination not passed at the next administration.” The examination administration includes the testing dates and the two weeks that schools have to collect and ship the test materials to the scoring center. The testing contractor needs all tests before it can begin the scoring process. Furthermore, the scoring currently cannot be completed any sooner than eight weeks because the test has two written essays that must be hand scored at least twice.

Because test results and ordering deadlines come about the same time, it is important to wait at least ten weeks to receive either the electronic information on score results or the number of students who have passed from the testing contractor prior to placing an order for the next administration. This places the test administrations about four months apart for any group of students. Districts are required to offer the test once to tenth graders in the spring administration cycle, and are encouraged to provide up to seven additional opportunities to students who have not passed the CAHSEE. However, students are not required to take the test at each additional opportunity offered by the district. Students at risk of not passing, or who have not passed one or both parts of this test, are to be offered supplemental instruction that provides remediation in the content area(s) of difficulty.

## Proposed Regulations Amendments

In order to clarify the issue of testing dates, the CDE is proposing that the regulations be amended to include Section 1204.5 as follows:

- School districts shall offer the examination three times a year to pupils in the eleventh and twelfth grades who have not yet passed one or both sections.
- School districts shall select one of two testing schedules for administering the examination to its eleventh and twelfth grade pupils—**July, November, March** or **September, January, May**.
- For multitrack year-round schools [or schools on other alternative schedules], the district may select both testing schedules for administering the examination.
- Students shall be provided one opportunity to pass the examination after the completion of other twelfth-grade requirements.
- In no case may a student take the CAHSEE more than once in a test cycle.

## March and May Test Administration Notes

- **Pre-identification file.** The CAHSEE pre-identification file will not match the changes in the STAR file until July 2003 when we begin a new year of testing. Please save your previous computer programs for the CAHSEE pre-id file to use for the March or May test administration.
- CDE will require an answer sheet for every eligible student in tenth grade to be completed and returned for the March and May administrations. We are asking schools to comply with this for purposes of the Academic Performance Index. The grade 10 enrollment used for API purposes will come from the number of answer documents returned by school districts at the census (March and May) administration. ETS will have several codes for schools to follow if an eligible student is unable to test.

## For More Information...

For more information about the CAHSEE or other state assessments, contact the Standards and Assessment Division of the California Department of Education at (916) 445-9449 (phone), at (916) 319-0969 (fax), at [CAHSEE@cde.ca.gov](mailto:CAHSEE@cde.ca.gov) (e-mail), or at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/statetests> (Internet). Your questions will be directed to the appropriate person.